



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HHS activates aid for uninsured citizens of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands needing medicine after Super Typhoon Yutu

Uninsured citizens of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), a U.S. territory, are eligible for no-cost replacements of critical medications lost or damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu. This relief comes from the Emergency Prescription Assistance Program ([EPAP](#)), managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response ([ASPR](#)).

“We are committed to doing everything we can to protect Americans from the potential health impacts of disasters, and Emergency Prescription Assistance Program is one part of that effort,” said HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Robert Kadlec, M.D. “EPAP provides vital assistance to people without insurance who rely upon certain prescription medicines and equipment to protect their health after disasters. I encourage citizens in Northern Mariana Islands who qualify for this assistance to take advantage of it.”

At no cost to uninsured patients, those needing [certain prescription medications](#) during an emergency can obtain a 30-day supply at any EPAP participating pharmacy through Nov. 24, 2018. Most [prescription drugs](#) are covered under the program.

Uninsured patients also may use EPAP to replace specific medical supplies or medical equipment, such as canes and walkers, damaged or lost as a direct result of Super Typhoon Yutu or as a secondary result of loss or damage caused while in transit from the emergency site to an emergency shelter.

More than 72,000 pharmacies participate nationwide. All of the pharmacies in the CNMI are open and the following pharmacies in Saipan participate in the Emergency Prescription Assistance Program:

- Brabu Pharmacy, 101 Akari Road
- Phi Pharmacy, 1 Navy Hill Road
- Phi I, Joeten Dandan Center

Emergency Prescription Assistance Program provides an efficient mechanism for enrolled pharmacies to process claims for prescription medication, specific medical supplies, and some forms of [durable](#)

[medical equipment](#) for eligible individuals in a federally identified disaster area. All pharmacies in the United States are eligible to participate. Pharmacies in the CNMI can call 888-571-8182, toll-free, to be added to the program.

Uninsured CNMI residents affected by Super Typhoon Yutu can call 855-793-7470, to learn if their medication or specific durable medical equipment is covered by EPAP and to find a participating pharmacy or visit www.phe.gov/epap.

HHS also has personnel from Disaster Medical Assistance Teams and the U.S. Public Health Service [Commissioned Corps](#) working alongside local healthcare providers to care for patients at CNMI clinics, shelters and community centers. In the initial days after the storm, these teams also provided emergency medical care at the hospital in Saipan. In the first two weeks, these personnel have seen more than 2,100 patients, primarily for clean-up related injuries such as lacerations and puncture wounds, and primary care needs.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has information available to help citizens understand the safe use of medical products, including [insulin](#) and [devices](#), exposed to flooding or unsafe water after Super Typhoon Yutu. This information includes the safe use of temperature-sensitive [drugs](#) when refrigeration is temporarily unavailable.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention subject matter experts are working with the territory health department to determine any long-term public health or environmental health effects of Super Typhoon Yutu and are making public health information available, such as tips on safe clean up and preventing common post-disaster diseases.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has taken measures necessary to give healthcare providers, facilities and suppliers the flexibility needed to provide continued access to care following the catastrophic storm. CMS temporarily waived or modified certain Medicare and Medicaid requirements. CMS has [issued waivers](#) as necessary, and the CMS Regional Office can grant other provider-specific requests for the hospital and other CNMI healthcare facilities.

CMS also worked with the Kidney Community Emergency Response network and dialysis providers to check on the well-being of dialysis patients and reschedule their dialysis services at open dialysis facilities after the super typhoon.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) activated its Disaster Distress Helpline, a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. The Disaster Distress Helpline is toll-free, multilingual, and confidential. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster. Call 1-800-985-5990 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

SAMHSA also has resources available to assist residents with the behavioral health impacts of disasters, including tips for parents and educators on [talking with children](#) after traumatic events. Children respond to trauma in many different ways, and the tips cover signs of stress reactions in different age groups and how to help.

Following President Trump's emergency declaration for Super Typhoon Yutu, HHS Secretary Alex Azar declared a [public health emergency](#) in CNMI on Oct. 25, 2018, to authorize flexibilities for CMS beneficiaries. These flexibilities are retroactive to Oct. 24, 2018.

HHS, through its Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), leads the federal government's public health and medical response and recovery support for states and territories after disasters. HHS works to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans, providing for effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health, and social services. ASPR's mission is to save lives and protect Americans from 21st century health security threats.

Information on disaster health and HHS actions is available on www.phe.gov/emergency. Public Service Announcements with post-storm health tips are available on <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/psa/index.html>.

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